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S E C R E T THE HAGUE 003162

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/2014

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [NL](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: THE NETHERLANDS/ISAF STAGE II EXPANSION

REF: A. STATE 251753

[B](#). DEAN-HOLLIDAY EMAIL 11/26/04

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ANDREW SCHOFER FOR REASONS 1.4 (B AND D)

[1](#). (S) PolMilOff made ref A demarche to Dutch MFA Security Policy Operations Director Rob Gabrielse on November 26 (preliminary reaction reported ref B) and raised it again with Gabrielse on December 2. Gabrielse said this request had been discussed within the Dutch interagency working group that reviews military deployments and that a Dutch contribution to ISAF Stage II was unlikely. He claimed the problem was one of "timing," and cited various other Dutch commitments in the coming months that would prevent them from being able to contribute to Stage II. These commitments include: participation in NRF IV with 4000 personnel, providing a battalion for the NATO Strategic Reserve (which Gabrielse said would be done without caveats, and which he noted could be used in Afghanistan), the Dutch stabilization deployment of 1400 personnel in Iraq (currently set to end in March 2005) as well as possible commitment of special operations forces to OEF. Gabrielse repeated the frequently expressed Dutch claim that they feel they are doing their "fair share" and that they think pressure should be put on countries that are "not contributing." Gabrielse hoped the informal force generation meeting at NATO on December 6 would "sensitize" other countries to do more.

[2](#). (C) Comment: The Dutch continue to plead overstretch in military deployments. In addition to the missions cited by Gabrielse, they have also renewed their commitment of a battalion for EUFOR in Bosnia and have offered a small contribution (approximately 130 personnel) for the NATO Training Mission in Iraq. Dutch Army CINC LTG Urlings frequently claims 80 percent of his deployable forces are committed. More recently, the Dutch have been citing their commitment to NRF IV as a reason to avoid other commitments in early 2005. We do not detect a reluctance in principle to expanding the Dutch presence in Afghanistan. Defense Minister Kamp recently stated in a parliamentary defense debate that the Netherlands "could well be involved" in a second PRT in 2005. (As noted ref B, the Dutch are considering a possible contribution to ISAF Stage III, possibly in cooperation with the Canadians.) This type of trial balloon in an open debate is a standard GONL practice in beginning the decision-making process for a deployment. End comment.
RUSSEL